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THE ALMA-ATA OBSERVATORY

Wochen-Zeitung,
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[The following information was taken from one of a series of articles published in the Luxembourg official Communist weekly, Wochen-Zeitung, in which a staff writer, Evy Friedrich, reports on a journey through the USSR.]

The Alma-Ata Observatory is located on a mountain above Alma-Ata and can be reached by automobile over a dirt road. It consists of a group of primitive shacks built of planks or corrugated metal. The roofs may be opened by pulling at wire ropes. A new observatory building with a dome is under construction, however.

Three of the astronomers who received the visitors knew foreign languages. They are exploiting foreign astronomical periodicals published in English, French, and German, reporting to each other on the results.

The French-speaking member, a young girl, demonstrated to the visitors one of the telescopes in a wooden shack; the only other equipment in the room was a plain writing table. In order to make observations, the worker has to lie on the floor and cover one of his eyes with his hand. The telescope in question, equipped with a clockwork mechanism, was used to observe solar prominences.

In another shed, on a flat roof, is the most powerful camera in the world for sky photography. Photographs of Mars and of the sun, presented at a recent astronomers' conference in Rome, were taken at the Alma-Ata Observatory.

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